



**Testimony of Jean Caron,  
in Support of Governor's Bill No. 5052, Section 4,  
*An Act Implementing the*  
*Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services*  
February 20, 2014**

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Jean Caron. I am an advocacy volunteer with AARP and also a caregiver for my 94-year old mom. Between these two roles I am working full time in my retirement. Today, I am testifying in support of Section 4 of Governor's Bill Number 5052. This section would expand access to home and community based services for adults with disabilities so they can age with dignity and autonomy in their own home.

As a family caregiver I am experiencing the value first hand of the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. This program has been a godsend to me and many like me. Just two years ago my Mom had a heart attack and suddenly needed more care. At about this time I had started to volunteer with AARP and through that involvement learned about the services available through the Connecticut Home Care Program. Today she receives a plethora of services that allow her to continue to live independently in her own home and gives me the peace of mind to know that she is safe. I am grateful for these services and for the continued commitment to the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders in the Governor's Budget Recommendations. However, these services are not always available for those under the age of 65.

Currently 103 people with degenerative neurological conditions like ALS, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease are stuck on a wait list for home and community based services that would help keep them out of an institution. Sadly, the average wait time from application to enrollment in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Adults with Disability is approximately 3 years. Section 4 of Governor's Bill 5052 would help address this barrier by doubling the number of slots from 50 to 100. While that still leaves a lot of people on the waitlist; it's a significant improvement. The expansion will support family caregivers who are trying to keep loved ones out of nursing homes. Access to community based services can make the difference for family caregivers struggling to maintain their employment, pay taxes and stay afloat financially. Please support expansion of the Connecticut Home Care Programs for Adults with Disabilities.

Additionally, I want to thank the Committee for your leadership in advancing the Community First Choice Option. Last year, your advocacy on Community First Choice, spurred serious consideration of how the program could be implemented in Connecticut. Under this federal incentive program, Connecticut can expand access to Personal Care Attendants services that keep individuals out of institutions and secure additional federal funding to pay the cost.

AARP is pleased that the Governor has decided to proceed with Community First Choice in his Budget proposal and we ask for your continued leadership and support. Thank you!